

Date: February 29, 2008

### **Influenza Antiviral Use for Persons at High Risk**

According to recent nationwide surveillance data, many communities are reporting substantially increased influenza activity. The CDC requests that clinicians be aware of the potential benefits of influenza antiviral medications, particularly for persons with severe influenza illness or those at high risk for influenza complications. The CDC Health Advisory on this subject is available in the "News" section on EMAN.

The two prescription antiviral medications recommended for influenza treatment or prevention are oseltamivir (Tamiflu<sup>®</sup>) and zanamivir (Relenza<sup>®</sup>). Benefits include reduced risk of death among older hospitalized adults with laboratory-confirmed influenza. Because of high levels of resistance to adamantane antiviral medications (rimantadine and amantadine) continue to be observed among circulating influenza A viruses, adamantanes are not recommended for treatment or prevention of influenza.

Healthcare providers are encouraged to consider whether to recommend influenza antiviral treatment based on the severity of the patient's illness, the time since illness onset, local influenza surveillance data and influenza test results. If possible, antiviral treatment should begin within 48 hours of symptom onset. However, for severe cases and those at high risk of complications, antiviral treatment should be considered even after 48 hours.

Local health care providers are encouraged to perform rapid influenza tests on patients presenting with influenza-like illness (ILI). Positive influenza detections should be reported to the San Diego County Public Health Laboratory via fax at 619-692-8558. Outbreaks of influenza in institutional settings should be reported to the Community Epidemiology Branch at 619-515-6620.

The latest Influenza surveillance update for San Diego County is available at:  
<http://www2.sdcountry.ca.gov/hhsa/ServiceDetails.asp?ServiceID=144>

More information about influenza antiviral medications is available at:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/>

Thank you for your continued participation.

Emergency Medical Alert Network (EMAN)  
County of San Diego, Health & Human Services Agency  
Community Epidemiology Branch